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POPULAR TALES.

From the Portland Transcript.

THE RESCUE.

A Tale of the Woods of Maine.

BY CHARLES F. HALEY.

CHAPTER I.

The frequent accounts which of late years we have heard of Indian invasions and massacres in the remote settlements of the Floridas, may serve to give us some, though a very faint idea of the trials and dangers to which the early settlers of New England were exposed. Few in numbers, with no power to rely on but their own strong hands and stout hearts—surrounded by an unbroken wilderness, overrun with an enemy who never heeded the calls of mercy—their situation was a thousand times worse than that of the Florida settler, over whom a powerful Government threw its protecting shield.

The scene of our story is laid in one of our Maine settlements, at that trying period of their history when they exposed to the long and bloody wars with the Indians, who, instigated by the French, carried desolation and death wherever they went. There were cases, however, when the dreaded tomahawk was arrested and the victim spared—not from motives of humanity, but from the sordid lust of gain—for though the French awarded what may truly be called blood-money for each reeking scalp, yet a higher price was given for captives, especially if females, delivered in Canada; so that cupidity often stayed the murderous hand when mercy pleaded in vain.

Toward the close of a summer day, about a century ago, two young men were seated upon a knoll amidst a dense forest—the site of a populous village in the neighborhood of one of our Maine settlements. They were fine, hardy looking fellows, with well-knit joints and brawny muscles, evidently inured to the toils and hardships of a new country. They were each armed with a hunting knife, and their dress and equipments evidently showed that they were out on no common errand. This was indeed the case. They were on the pursuit of a band of savages, who, the night before, had attacked and burnt the dwelling of a neighbor, the uncle of one of them, and after severely wounding the father, had taken into captivity two of his daughters, who were just on the verge of womanhood. Soon as the fact became known, pursuit was made by such as could by any possibility leave their own households. Among the foremost were the young men in question, whose activity and eagerness had given them the start of all the others.

At the time we have introduced them to the reader they had come to a halt, after a fatiguing tramp in a vain search for the trail of the savages. They had kindled a fire for the purpose of preparing the evening meal, and had been for a short time seated on the small knoll, consulting in regard to future movements, when a slight rustling in the woods in front of them attracted their attention and caused them to spring to their feet in a hostile attitude. They had barely time to assume a defensive position, when from a clump of bushes near which they had kindled the fire, and which was sending up thick curls of smoke, the tall, gaunt form of a man appeared, dressed in the habiliments of a hunter. In his hand he bore a rifle of unusual length, and depended from his deer skin belt was a broad knife—both of which instruments bore signs of constant use. There was something peculiar in the appearance of the new comer which could not fail to arrest the observer's attention. He was tall and straight as an arrow, and though but slightly built, his form exhibited a muscular development which betokened great physical power. His face was bronzed by the weather, and from under a singular looking cap, made from the skin of some wild animal, a few gray hairs struggled, telling of length of years. The expression of his countenance was rather mild than otherwise, though the wrinkles and scars of time more than ordinarily good looking. His eye, however, still retained all the fire of youth, and its quick rolling seemed to take all things in one comprehensive glance. Scarcely looking at the startled young men, he strode toward the fire, and in a moment the smoking embers were trampled beneath his feet.

"What on earth possessed you—are you stark, staring mad, youngsters?" exclaimed the intruder, as he ground the last expiring ember beneath his heel.

"Why, Joe, what are you about—you have spoilt our supper," said one of the party stepping forward.

"And saved your scalp, mayhap, young man!" returned the hunter, whom some of our readers will recognize as the "scout," a prominent character in a former story relating to our early history. Those who now meet him for the first time will gain a proper insight of the man as they follow us in our story.

"I don't see," said the first speaker, not relishing the idea of losing his evening meal, "how

the fire you have so unceremoniously extinguished was to endanger us."

"That's all owing to your ignorance, Jim Smith. When you've lived in the woods as long as I have, you will have learnt something, boy, that you don't find in the books."

"But what harm could the fire do?" asked Smith, in a more conciliatory tone.

"The fire is harmless youngster—'tis the smoke that might play the mischief."

"I cannot perceive how," rejoined the young man, inquiringly.

"That's 'cause you don't know. Why don't you shout aloud?—why don't you discharge your rifle in the air?—tell me that."

"That would be madness indeed, surrounded as we are by the Indians."

"Do you think, boy, the red skins haint eyes as well as ears? Look up, youngster—don't you think that that smoke-wreath whirling over the top of yonder pine is not as good a signal as the crack of a rifle? I saw it a mile off, and there are sharper eyes prying about the woods than mine, I consate."

"The truth at once flashed upon the minds of the young men. They saw their folly, and the superior wisdom of the new comer.

"You are right, scout," remarked the other and elder of the party, "it was blind in us; but it has served us one good turn, in directing your steps hither."

"I was on your trail, youngsters, and should have found you out sooner or later. But this is no place to waste our time in. There may be others directed here whose company might not be quite so welcome as mine. Shoulder your traps, my young friends, and be off. Here, step lightly along this trunk until you reach the ledge of rocks yonder; don't turn so much as a leaf, if you can help it; and mind and keep the sun over your right shoulder as you go along."

"Are you not going with us, Joe?" remarked Smith, as he prepared to obey the directions.

"Sartinly, sartinly, what am I here for? I shall overtake you before night closes in; but I want to leave a trail in another direction to draw off the serpents, if so be they should come here. Keep along the rocks and ledges as much as you can, and mind and keep your tongues still—'tis a bad member and breeds a deal of mischief, in the woods as in the world!"

So saying the scout moved off in a contrary direction, leaving a well defined trail behind him.

CHAPTER II.

had been overtaken by the scout, for, as we have said, their search in discovering the direct route of the savages had been in vain. As it happened, however, they had not deviated far from the course the enemy had taken. Before meeting with the scout, they had been consulting about giving up the pursuit and returning home, but his presence gave them fresh ardor, and they now avowed their determination to continue on until they had rescued the captives or wreaked their vengeance on the captors.

Following the directions given, they proceeded on their way, passing silently and cautiously along, keeping the sun on their right cheek until it had disappeared from sight, and the woods began to grow dim in the coming shadows of night, when they came to a halt, anxiously awaiting the reappearance of their sagacious leader. The wary movements of the scout had impressed them more thoroughly with the danger that surrounded them, and rendered them doubly watchful. Keeping their weapons in readiness for immediate use, they scrutinized every thicket and rising knoll, fearful that they might conceal a foe, while every sound was listened to with breathless attention, as giving warning of the approaching savage.

There was no lack of courage betrayed by either of the young men; they were naturally brave and resolute, and would have met an open foe without shrinking. It was the sense of a hidden, unknown danger impending, which aroused their apprehension. The fast increasing darkness, the gathering gloom of the forest, heightened by the low, melancholy moan of the pines, with the occasional crashing of the fallen branches, caused probably by the passage of some denizen of the wilderness, frequently thrilled their hearts with a vague sense of fear, and made them long for the presence of one, whose sagacity and experience was to them an assurance of safety.

As the dusk of twilight deepened into the darkness of night, and objects at a little distance one after another disappeared from sight, they began to fear that the scout would be unable to find them in the labyrinth of the forest. This conviction growing every moment more strong, they thought it time to make some disposition for passing the night in comfort and safety. As they were moving about for this purpose, they were alarmed by the sudden appearance of a man in their vicinity, whose noiseless approach—coming ghost-like from the obscurity of the wilderness—induced them to spring simultaneously to where they had deposited their arms, in the full expectation of having to grapple with a deadly enemy. The long rifle and gaunt figure, which a second glance enabled them to recognize, as quickly undeceived them, and hearty was the welcome with which they greeted their ally.

"We were afraid you had missed us," said one of the young men, "and were about preparing a place for rest."

"Whist! whist! speak low," said the scout in a subdued voice, "'tis an hour when sound travels fast and far, and there may be those with in earshot—Ha! look to your arms, youngsters!" he exclaimed in a more energetic tone, without raising his voice, at the same time kneeling behind the trunk of a fallen tree.

The cause of alarm was a sudden rustling and crackling of dry leaves in the distance, as by the approach of some one. The young men followed the example of their leader, crouching beside him for ready action. The noise grew louder and louder as the disturber drew near, who apparently broke through the bushes and underbrush violently, and with no attempt at concealment.

"'Tis some pesky varmint," whispered the old man, "the red skins are too cunning to make such a rumpus as this. I've seen 'em at all times," he continued, suffering his rifle to rest carelessly on the tree, as if satisfied that no danger was to be apprehended. "I've been with 'em in peace and in war—when their blood was up and when cool—and they're always the same dreadful, serpent-like motion. They're wary critters, and dreadful loath to leave a trail even for friends to follow. Hist! there it comes. 'Tis a she painter—about the wickedest thing to be found in the woods, of the four-footed kind."

As the scout spoke, one of those formidable animals—a huge panther, with eyes glaring like balls of fire, passed by an opening a short distance on their right, on a half trot, half leap—crushing through the obstacles in its path, as if they offered no impediment to its speed.

"If 'twant for the enemy I'd stop the tarnation critter's frisking," said the scout, gazing in the direction it had taken, "for I owe 'em a grudge. They've no more mercy than a red skin, and I shall carry the marks of their claws to my grave—if so be I find one."

"Have you any doubts in regard to that, scout?" asked one of his companions.

"Sartinly I have, boy. Where the tree grows there it falls and rots—and so it is with most people burrowed in towns; there they are rooted and die, and the church-yard grows fat; but when a marvellous Providence sees fit to call me, there's no saying where I may be found. I've a strange liking for the woods, and I should wish to rest in their solitude, with the thick boughs waving their green arms over me, and the leaves rustling and playing near. It would seem more nat'ral like. I do not hate my kind, the Lord knows that; but I have always fancied being alone, on the chase or trail, and when I die, if so be it is His will, I would rather that my dust should not mingle with the church-yard folks. But this is a subject to be thought of in secret, and not babbled idly about. It is time we should be thinking of sleep. My mind misgives me that we have a long trail before us, and we must be stirring."

the night, taking care alternately to guard themselves against a surprise, either from the prowling beast of the forest or the lurking savage.

CHAPTER III.

By the first glimmer of day the old scout was on the move. Without disturbing his still sleeping companions, he glanced cautiously around him—shook the old priming from his rifle and reprimed her, inspecting carefully the lock and barrel, eyeing and fondling her as if it were a thing to return his affection, after which he glided stealthily into the surrounding forest.

An hour, perhaps, passed away, during which the young men had got astir, and were wondering at the disappearance of their guide, when he returned, and with a cheerful tone, exclaimed,

"Wal, I've got a track of the varmints! Come, boys, we've no time to lose: we'll eat as we go along. There's a fine spring—God's blessing in the wilderness—just out yonder, which will serve to wash down the dry bread and meat, and leading the way, he branched suddenly off from the course they had been pursuing, until, after an hour's rapid travelling, they struck, as the scout said, the trail, when they again changed the direction of their route.

To the young men the course they were now pursuing was quite as blind as ever. A dense wilderness surrounded them, and though they followed their leader with an undoubted confidence in his knowledge, they saw nothing in the appearance of things which afforded the least clue to the direction to be followed. After a while one of them remarked, enquiringly, that he could detect no signs of a trail.

"Why, youngster," replied the scout, "'tis as plain as dame Rawson's face, and that I consate is the plainest thing in the settlement! Here, my boys," he continued, as he stopped in his rapid walk, "may be you can learn something that will be serviceable to you hereafter. Look about you now—look close and sharp, and see if you cannot find out the trail."

"The young men stepped forward and examined carefully every inch of the place, scrutinizing closely the bushes and fallen leaves, but all to no purpose, and they acknowledged that they saw nothing to denote the track of the savages. The scout gave a low chuckle, evidently pleased at their failure.

"Wal, wal, 'tis onaccountable what ignorance there is in the world. But man's never too old to learn, they say. Here you, Hugh Sands, step this way a little; now stoop down and observe these leaves. Don't you see this one is pressed down flat to the earth, and that one is bent over and broken, and all along, just the length of a man's foot, they don't look like these out here, which lay nat'ral like, just as they fell from the tree, one on top o' t'other, carelessly. Now run your eye along about a step and you will discover the same appearance. There you see the grass is slightly bent forward while the other stands up straight. Then ag'in, observe these bushes—this broken twig and that turned leaf—aint it clear enough that something has brushed by them? These signs you can barely discern, but I can read them as easily as I can your dad's grocery sign in the settlement, 'specially now while the dew is on."

"And here is something plainer still," said Smith, who had gone a little ahead, and who now returned, holding in his hand a comb, dropped either accidentally or designedly by one of the captives.

Their guide needed not this assurance that he was on the right course, although the discovery seemed to animate his companions, who now pressed forward with renewed vigor.

It was at the close of the third day, and many a weary mile had the three passed over, following like hounds the tracks of the savages, that we again introduce the party to the reader. They had halted on the bank of a shallow river, the outlet of a large pond, which spread out before them fringed on either hand as far as the eye could reach with a luxuriant growth of bush and tree the foliage of which bent over and coqueted with the crystal waters—seeming, in their placid repose, like a vast mirror framed with living green. From the signs around them, they were convinced they were in the close vicinity of the enemy.

After a short consultation, the scout went forward to reconnoitre, leaving his companions in the dense woods which skirted the stream. Creeping along the edge of the forest, for he strongly suspected that the foe were on the opposite bank, the old man proceeded some way down the river, until the fast fading twilight gave way to the duskiess of night. Feeling secure from observation, he then cautiously forded the stream, and plunging into the opposite woods, directed his way to the outlet of the pond.

In the mean time the young men remained in their covert, waiting impatiently to learn the result of the scout's movements. The thought that they were in the immediate neighborhood of a crafty and cruel foe, and that they might be shortly engaged with them in deadly contest, was fraught with exciting interest. Their anxiety was not wholly unminged with fear. They knew not the force of the band they were seeking; while their own weakness made their pursuit seem to them like temerity.

What if the scout should fall, with their total ignorance of their course, and surrounded by unparrying enemy, a sure death was in prospect. Still, they were not disheartened, and their resolve to rescue the captives at all hazards, remained unshaken.

Two hours or more passed slowly by and they sat in silence and darkness—the thick foliage shutting out the light of the stars, and the dirge-like moan of the pine sounding mournfully in the gloom over their spirits. For sometime they had thus sat, each busy with his own fancies, without a word being spoken between them. At last, in the far distance, the faint cry of a night owl came from the opposite banks, causing them to start to their feet in a listening attitude. After a prolonged interval the same boding cry was repeated.

"That's the scout's signal," said Sands in a low hurried whisper, "we must be on our guard—he has found them."

"Pray heaven they may not detect him," said Smith in a somewhat anxious tone.

"There is not much danger; the old fellow knows all their ways, and is possessed of all their cunning. He will be here soon, and then comes the final tug."

According to previous directions the young men now crept noiselessly down to the brink, which went bawling on its way, the white foam flashing out occasionally as it broke over the rocky shallows, then darting along a smoother current, until it was lost in the gloom of the forest, into which the dark stream glided like some huge serpent seeking a covert.

CHAPTER IV.

As the young men stood side by side gazing thoughtfully on the rippling stream, a hand was laid on the shoulder of each, and a low voice whispered in their ear—

"Hush, not a word! They are there—follow me."

Turning, they followed the scout, who crept softly up the stream until they reached the outlet of the pond, when, stealing round a jutting crag which effectually concealed them from the opposite shore, they halted, and in a more subdued tone the scout related his discoveries.

"I have been among the serpents, and had it not been for the gals' safety I would have crushed one of the reptiles, for I had him at my mercy. It was a sore temptation, I tell ye. There are but five of them, the rest have not arrived, or have gone off on some other divilry. I saw the gals, too, and they seemed to be in pretty good case. Ah! that Kate is a bright one!"

"Did you speak to her?" asked Sands, with a feeling and tone of deep interest.

"Speak to her!—that would have been no easy matter, youngster, with two of the varmints within earshot. No, no, hunting Joe is not a gossiping old woman—he is too old to run his head into such a trap!"

"But you contrived to let her know that friends were near at hand," rejoined Smith.

"Speak low, boy, the red skins have quick ears, and sound travels pesky far and fast in a still night like this. Deaf in the world and dumb in the woods is a maxim I learnt arly in life. Yes, I let 'em know that the old scout was on their trail."

"How did you manage it?" asked Smith.

"Wal, if you must know, and as we have a little time to spare, I'll tell ye. He then went on to state, that, after creeping through the woods and finding out that the Indians were there, and the position of the captives, he stole round to a clump of bushes directly behind a small knoll on which they were seated. "When I got there," said he, "I was within a few feet of them; but

'twas a dangerous job to attract their attention, for I could see the dark reptiles coiled round in the open space in front, ready for a spring. The shaking of a limb or the snapping of a twig would have aroused them. I had the comb you found, with me, and by a slight throw I tossed it into Kate's lap. It struck the gal's hand, and I expected her surprise would give the alarm; but except a slight start, she showed not the least concern. Bending down her head she whispered a word or two to her sister, and then secretly made a sign, giving me to understand that all was right. Ah, she is a quick witted critter, that gal," added the scout in conclusion, "and I'll save her if I die for't."

"Well, what plan have you fixed upon?" asked one of the young men, as he concluded his narration.

The old man remained silent for a while, as if revolving the matter in his mind.

"It is a risky business—but I don't see as we can do better," he at last said, as if speaking to himself. "If you were as well acquainted with the woods as I am," he continued, addressing his companions, "we might creep among the enemy and take them by surprise, for they seem to be unsuspecting of an attack. But there's too much at stake, for if they should be alarmed the gals would be tomahawked to a dead certainty. It is my opinion that they will stay where they are to night, and start arly in the morning up the lake, as I detected three canoes hid among the bushes. Now, what I think on is this—to get possession of their canoes—destroy one, let you have the second to bring off the young women, and I will take the other to act as a sump-sucker may turn up."

"When shall we start?" asked Sands.

"'Tis about time to be moving, I s'pose," said the scout, "the moon will be up in two or three hours, and we must get them out of their clutches before then."

So saying, he commenced stripping off his garments, adding—"To-morrow is a long tramp, I must take to the water. You will stay here till I come back. Don't move about, and if you must talk, speak in whispers, for the slightest noise might betray us."

With this caution, having laid aside his garments, he entered the water, and in a moment was lost to sight, as he swam rapidly but noiselessly away, leaving scarcely a ripple in his wake.

CHAPTER V.

The distance to the opposite shore, was, perhaps, not great, but the water was so placid, that the scout urged his way through the placid waters, his head laid low to the surface—at times floating motionless, while his searching glance and quick ear were on the alert—then propelling himself along with renewed caution, until he approached the opposite bank, which rose somewhat abruptly, covered with a dense growth of tall bushes. Gliding into their deep shadows he soon found the objects of his search.

It required all the cunning and adroitness he was master of, after he had reached his prizes, to launch them in the water, fasten them together, and tow them from the dangerous neighborhood. Having got them afloat, he fastened them in a line, and hugging the deep shadows cast by the overhanging foliage, he went some distance up before he shot out into the bosom of the lake. Dipping his paddle so as not to disturb the quiet of the water and crouching low in the canoe, he succeeded in transferring his prizes in safety to the spot where his young partizans were anxiously awaiting the issue of the adventure.

"Privateersmen talk of capturing a craft from under the guns of an enemy," said the scout in a jocular tone, as he deliberately ran his knife through the frail material of one of his prizes, which he had taken on shore, gnashing large holes in various parts of its bottom, "can they boast of a better cutting out than this?" and he gave the finishing stroke to his work of destruction.

"Now, boys," he added, "see to your primings—shake out the old ones, for the dews may have dampened the powder, and a flash in the pan may prove your death."

Having made every necessary arrangement in regard to their proceedings, the arms were deposited in the canoes, ready for use at a moment's warning, and they embarked, the scout taking the lead.

"Follow me," said he, "and be careful of your paddles when you cross the pond. For the present we must drag ourselves along a piece under the shelter of these bushes. Don't hurry—move coolly and deliberately, and when you let go the branches, mind and not let them jerk back, but slip gently out of your hands."

With these whispered cautions the scout forced his canoe close in the bushes, dragging it carefully along and followed by the young men, who were admonished from time to time by expressive signals to be on their guard. For a long distance they proceeded in this manner, and so adroitly did the old man make his way, that scarcely the motion of a twig or the rustling of a leaf betrayed his movements.

When he had at last reached what he considered a safe distance, he struck out into the lake with his paddle, and ere long, with his companions, reached the shelter of the foliage of the opposite side. Abandoning the paddles, they adopted the same method as at first, and by the aid of the pendant branches and the long grass, which in the occasional openings grew luxuriantly to the water's edge, they forced their light barks along.

At one of these openings, where the land sloped gradually to the lake, and at a short distance from the outlet, they stopped, and a brief consultation ensued.

"You will remain here," said the scout to Smith, "while your companion will go part the

with me to lead the gals to the place. When you get them on board, don't be frustrated. Bid them sit still, for these bark things are ticklish consarns; and when you get ready, drag yourselves along as you came, until I come up with you. But if I am long delayed, hide yourselves under that clump of young alders which I pointed out to you as we came along. The trailing branches will shelter you completely from sight. Have your thoughts about you, youngsters. I like your actions—you've behaved well thus far, sartainly. Don't spoil all now at the tug of the game—be cool, be cool!" And with this repeated warning, he stepped on shore, dragging his canoe into the grass, and then moved stealthily towards the foe, followed by Sands, who accompanied him a short distance, to the edge of a slight opening, where he betokened him to stop, while he glided with a noiseless step into the open space and disappeared behind a thick growth of bushes.

CHAPTER VI.

The Indians had halted in a small opening in the forest close by the outlet. In the full confidence that all danger from pursuit was over, they had relaxed from their usual watchfulness over their prisoners, and instead of keeping them by their sides, as they had heretofore when they slept, they had allowed them to sit apart, taking the precaution, however, to bind their ankles with thongs. In the early part of the night the sisters, as if worn out with fatigue, had feigned deep slumber. Indeed the distance they had travelled, and the almost constant watchfulness of the preceding nights rendered rest absolutely necessary to their worn frames. But the intuition they had received of friends lurking near, aroused them. To lull all suspicion, however, they thought it best to counterfeit sleep, and so satisfied were their captors of its reality and that they would remain unbroken, and so confident that they yielded themselves unreservedly to that repose which, from what they had lately undergone, nature imperiously demanded.

On a little mossy knoll, wholly unsheltered from the heavy dews, the captives had thrown themselves their deep, regular breathing betokening that their senses were locked in the deepest slumber, and that they were totally oblivious to the scene around them: and yet there was not a fall of a leaf—the snapping of a twig—the faint chirp of a half-aroused bird—the low rustling of a passing breeze rustling in the tops—not one of the many sounds that disturb the silence of night in a forest, that was not heard by those apparently unconscious sleepers. When the scout had apprised them of the presence of a friend, their bosoms throbbed with contending emotions—hope and fear alternately predominating. As the night wore away and no further signs of rescue appearing, their anxiety increased. More than once was the head of Catharine, the eldest, lifted from its mossy pillow, while she cast furtive glances around and eagerly listened to catch some sign of deliverance. Who they were that had dogged them to this place she knew not, but was her cousin, Sands, while Anne, the younger, as naturally believed that young Smith was among them.

While they were thus waiting in anxious solitude, counting the moments by the beating of their own hearts, and almost despairing of an attempt being made that night, a faint sound in the bushes behind them reached their ears, causing them simultaneously to hold their breath as they listened eagerly for its repetition. All, however, remained as still as before, and they came to the conclusion that their ears deceived them.

"I certainly thought I heard something, Anna," whispered the elder, placing her mouth close to her sister's ear.

"So did I," added her companion in a tremulous tone.

"Listen again, dear Anna!"

"Hush!" came a low warning at the speaker's ear interrupting her—"be silent as death!"

Be calm, Anna," whispered Catharine in a joyful tone to her startled sister—"it is hunting Joe, I know—his voice, we are safe!"

Even as she spoke the tall form of the scout rose in front of the bush behind them, just discernible in the gloom of night. Making a sign of silence, he stooped down and cut the thongs that bound them, and then whispered,

"On your lives, gals, be wary! Raise yourselves—hush! hush!" he hastily added, "don't stir, nor breathe!"

The caution thus suddenly given was occasioned by the movement of one of the savages, a red, perhaps, in front, who turned heavily on his leafy couch, muttering rapidly the unintelligible jargon of his tribe. For a moment the three remained breathlessly listening.

"The varmint is only dreaming," at length said the scout, in a tone of relief—"now up and follow me!"

The captives did as they were bid, moving with the greatest caution, until they reached the narrow passage in the bushes which lead from the opening, when the scout stopped but motioned them forward.

"I must stay here," he whispered to them as they crept by him, "to guard your retreat; you will find a friend close at hand. Bid him be careful, and remember that you are treading among sleeping adders—if you arouse them it is death!"

The two maidens nodded assent, and passing on soon cleared the clump of bushes, when a well-known voice, recognized though barely audible, greeted Kate, and a well-known hand grasped hers and guided them along the mazy wilderness to the canoe, in which they hastily seated themselves. Hardly had the trembling girls embarked in the frail vessel, and ere the young men, who followed the counsel of the scout by acting coolly and deliberately, had got fairly arranged for a start, they were alarmed by hearing from the direction whence they had come the expressive exclamation used by the red man when suddenly surprised, followed by a shrill whoop which rang wildly through the forest. Grasping the pendant branches the young men drew the canoe swiftly along, scarcely breathing until they had left the dangerous spot far behind. Their exertions were still further stimulated by soon hear-

ing the sharp crack of a rifle, followed by a yell so wild and unearthly, that the blood of the fugitives chilled as it swelled on the ear.

"It was the scout's rifle," said Sands, in a panting voice, "one of the savages has bit the dust!" and with an extra effort he sent the canoe with accelerated speed through the water.

Not another word was uttered until they reached the spot designated by the scout, where they drew the canoe carefully under the clustering foliage, which bent over so as to completely conceal them from the most prying observation. Here, they felt comparatively safe, and in low whispers congratulated themselves on their escape.

Their thoughts and anxieties were now centered on the scout, for they felt that their ultimate safety depended on his skill. They had not been long in their covert when they detected the sound of a faint ripple in the water, and almost in the same moment a canoe shot swiftly by their hiding place. It contained but one person, and as it passed, a low whisper reached their ears—"Be still, for your lives!" and the man and bark were lost in darkness.

But a minute or two intervened when they were again startled by the hurried dip of paddles, and presently another canoe containing four savages darted by farther out in the lake, and shooting off at an angle greatly favorable to the scout if he continued to hug the bank. With feelings of most intense anxiety the fugitives awaited the issue of events.

CHAPTER VII.

An hour, perhaps, passed by, although to the party in waiting it appeared an age, during which they listened eagerly, dreading every movement they should hear the savage yell of triumph. Motionless and silent they sat, filled with that sickly apprehension which springs from the consciousness of an impending though unknown danger—more trying to the nerves than the bold confronting of the evil. Every thing conspired to heighten their gloom—darkness and the darkness of the tomb—dew and fears and racking suspense.

Thus in dejected reverie, a slight jar from some object striking their frail bark sent a thrill of alarm through each breast.

Ere they recovered from the sudden shock, the scout, leaping lightly from his own canoe stood among them.

"Seize your paddles, boys," he whispered hurriedly, "the moon is up, and this is no place for us, I've sarnventured the varmints this time," and he gave utterance to a peculiar chuckle with which he was wont to express gratification.

Without further remark he forced the canoe from its concealment, and following down the banks, in a short time arrived near the outlet, where he struck out on the lake for the opposite shore. By this time the moon had got above the trees and threw a pillar of light along the lake's tranquil bosom.

"Now dip in your paddles, lads, for your lives," said the scout as he applied himself to the same task. "Dip easy and don't splash the water about: if we can reach the opposite bank we shall stand a smart chance of getting out of their providence will deliver you out of the hands of the spoilers! I tried hard," he continued, "to get to you before the moon was up, but the reptiles dogged me so close—ha! they have discovered us!"

As he spoke a loud whoop rang over the still waters from up the lake, and in the distance, where the rays of the moon glimmered on the surface, the canoe of the savages was seen in hot pursuit.

"Don't be frustrated, youngsters," exclaimed the old man in a loud, encouraging tone—"Put in all you know—a long sweep and a strong one, and we will distance them yet!" and putting all his skill and strength the canoe literally leaped over the water.

But on—and came the pursuers, evidently gaining upon them, and uttering yells of triumph as the distance between them lessened.

"Ha!" ejaculated the scout as his quick eye detected their approach, "we must put a stop to this. Don't lag, boys," he added as he drew in his paddle, "we'll see if there's any virtue in smooth-bore," and seizing his long rifle he aimed carelessly in his seat, raised the weapon to his shoulder and drew the trigger. The flame leaped forth—a wreath of smoke floated astern—the surrounding banks gave back echoes of the loud report, and high above them arose a frightful shriek from the canoe in chase, which fully indicated the fatality of the hunter's aim.

"Now we are on more equal terms," was his cool reply as he exchanged his rifle, after carefully reloading it, for the paddle.

Burning to revenge their comrade's death, the Indians seemed endowed with additional strength, and their light canoe flew over the lake with the swiftness of a swallow. Had the distance to the shore been greater, or had not the death of one of their party thrown them into a momentary confusion, the fugitives would inevitably have been overtaken and have encountered the fatal struggle in a situation in which the foe would have had them at great advantage. Fortunately the lake at this place was narrow, and, panting with exertion, the pursued reached the land some rods in advance of the savages.

"Smith, look to the gals!" shouted the scout, leaping to the shore rifle in hand followed by Sands—"get 'em out of harm's way—Sands and me will take care of these water snakes!"

Yelling with rage as they saw them land, the savages swept madly on—blind to every thing—thinking of nothing but to wreak vengeance on the pale faces. The scout and his young companion were on the bank, which arose gradually from the water's edge, the weapon of the latter resting on the trunk of a fallen tree, behind which he knelt.

"Mind your aim, youngster—wait for the word. Take the forward one, you can bring him down easier. Don't be skeared at their bellowing, it is the crittur's natur!"

Raising his rifle slowly, as if on an ordinary occasion, the scout gave the signal, and the reports of the two pieces were almost simultaneous.

When the smoke cleared away the Indian in the bow of the canoe was seen standing with uplifted paddle, brandishing it with wild gestures in the air like a war club—then giving a piercing

howl he sprang in the direction of the shore.—There was a heavy splash—a momentary struggle—a groan—and the bright water closed over the sinking savage. A second glance showed the form of another in the stern of the canoe, the head lying over the gunwale, motionless and ghastly.

"That finishes two of the varmints," exclaimed the scout, bringing the butt of his piece to the ground in the act of reloading it—"now for the other."

But before the words were fairly out of his mouth a shot from behind a tree, a little distance to the left and nearer the shore, where Smith had stationed himself, had finished the work of destruction, and the light bark rocked violently for a while on the agitated waters, disturbed by the struggles of its surviving occupant as he fell headlong into the lake.

For some time the party on shore stood gazing in silence upon the place where this scene of death had transpired, until the waters regained their placidity, and the frail canoe floated in the quiet moon-light a lone and desolate thing, to be driven with its ghastly freight whether the winds should list. Feeling the insecurity of the present neighborhood, preparations were made to leave it, and in a short time the party were moving slowly and silently through the forest toward their distant home.

We will not follow them on their fatiguing and dangerous journey. Enough that the settlement was a fast safely reached, and the captives rescued, like those from the dead, to their friends, who welcomed them and their deliverers with tears and thanksgivings.

OXFORD DEMOCRAT.

PARIS, MAY 9, 1843.

TO OUR PATRONS.

With this number commences a new Volume of the Democrat. Years have rolled on, and almost to our surprise, we find that it has entered upon its twelfth year. We take this occasion to thank our patrons for the support with which they have favored us, and for the kind treatment we have received at their hands. We are happy to say that many of you have met our terms with great promptitude, and given us that support without which we could not have continued our enterprise. It gives us pleasure, likewise, to say that all have shown an anxiety to fulfill their engagements. But we are obliged to say to some, however painful it may be to us or to them, that their subscriptions are still unpaid—that their accounts are still unsettled.—To this last class we must say, "pay us if you can;" let us have what is our due, and take the trouble to forward it the first opportunity. We need all that is ours.

During the period the Democrat has been published, we have seen in our country all sorts of times. Depression and elation, expansion and contraction, prosperity and adversity, joy and sorrow, excitement, enthusiasm, and infatuation; each and all have had their share in spicing its existence. At one time we were flooded with money. At another there was none to be had. It was so sudden and intricate that we could neither understand its source or apply with success the necessary remedy. These different states have all been brought about by the quackery of Political Demagogues—by the multiplicity of opinions that have prevailed among men whom the people have employed to do their political business—and for the want of correct instruction from those by whom we have suffered ourselves to be led. Are not a correct knowledge of History and of Political Economy necessary qualifications of a politician? Every man in his senses will say they are. But do those whom we select to make our laws possess this knowledge? Do those who conduct the political press possess it? The question is answered as soon as propounded. Therefore if we wish to prevent the endless variety of evils which are constantly arising from Demagogues and political quacks, let us select those men for political servants who are willing to promote peace, and who are able to guide us in safety.

We do not wish to have our patrons understand, by what has been said, that we are infallible. No such thing. We are subject to passions and errors like all others; and perhaps we have been guilty of more and greater errors than others. Circumstances have arisen during the past three years which have excited our most ardent sympathies. And being firmly persuaded that we were right, when in fact we might have been wrong, we have suffered our inclinations (though from a sense of duty at the time) to lead us in a way which has been repugnant to the great interests of the Democratic party. But in regard to these errors, if such our Democratic friends are disposed to call them, we are desirous of making our acknowledgment, in so far as we ought, and at the same time to ask every one who has felt himself aggrieved to "forgive and forget" all that has transpired of an irritating nature.

In regard to the future course of the Democrat, it is to be, as it has been, a Democratic Journal. It will support a revenue Tariff with incidental protection—a strict adherence to the letter and spirit of the Constitution—a safe and convenient mode of collecting and disbursing the public revenue. Every thing which conflicts with these fundamental principles will receive our decided opposition. In opposing, however, the principles and theories of others, we shall endeavor to present in as plain and fair a manner as possible the state of the question and the merits of the case.

In taking this course, we hope to meet the united approval of all in the County of Oxford, as well as the approval of all good men in the State. We are fully in the faith that the "Democrat" will be, if it has not been, as good a Family paper, so far as regards its moral tendency and its influence on the rising generation, as any paper in the State. If this is the case, and that it may be, and will be, so far as in us lies, we most sincerely promise and believe, we hope all men—liberal Whigs (for we have a number of that stamp on our subscription list now) as well as Democrats, will aid in giving the "Oxford Democrat" the value and importance a County paper ought to receive, and justify demands. In order that we may fulfill our promise we have engaged the services of a gentleman to conduct the political and literary departments of the paper.—One who, we hope, will give perfect satisfaction.

We cannot, however, fulfill our promises and your hopes and expectations, unless we can have a large addition to our subscription list, and a strict compliance with our terms. There are, at least, in this County, three hundred Democratic Families in which a paper like the Democrat ought to be received, besides those who now receive it. There are, also, at least five hundred other families who ought to furnish such a paper with 250 subscribers, by procuring a paper for two families. In our next number we shall send a prospectus to our friends and ask them to cordially unite with us in building up the great interests—the moral, political, literary, and Agricultural interests of "Old Oxford." Patrons, Democrats, Friends, Farmers! shall we not have your aid and co-operation.

WHAT SHALL BE THE BASIS OF REPRESENTATION TO THE STATE CONVENTION?

This is a question of vital importance, and several Democratic papers are engaged in its discussion. There are two methods proposed as a basis. The first is the method which has been in operation ever since the State was organized. Each town having a population sufficient to send a Representative to the Legislature, sends two Delegates to the State Convention; classes of towns and plantations are early; large towns have more than one Representative, two Delegates to each Representative.

The second, or new method, consists in a proposition to make the Representative Districts a basis. Each Representative District being entitled to send to the State Convention two Delegates. This latter plan, we admit, looks very well in theory. If we did not take the trouble to foresee its effect in practice, it might be disposed to think it would work admirably. But its admirable equality is only apparent, not real.—Under this method, how could closed towns and plantations, consisting of three or four towns and seven or eight plantations, meet, agree upon, and choose Delegates? They could not all assemble at one place without great inconvenience; and there are other difficulties in the way too numerous to mention. We venture to predict, should this method be adopted, that the people in closed towns, finding their duties so burdensome, would entirely despair of sending any delegates to the State Convention.

The former method meets our approbation, and will receive our support. And we have no doubt it will meet the approbation of the people throughout the County. Cities need not fear that too many Delegates will be sent to the Convention. Many closed towns will not send at all. Plantations will not send in many cases. Therefore closed towns and plantations will not, on the whole, have too much weight in the Convention.—We say nothing further on this subject at present, but wait for the report of the State Committee, who have it under consideration. We feel confident they will, for numerous reasons, adopt the old method. There may be difficulties in both, but wisdom should make us prefer that method in which there is the least.

VIRGINIA ELECTION.

THE CAUSE OF DEMOCRACY TRIUMPHANT.

This election was for 15 Representatives to the next Congress, and for members to the State Legislature. The following is the result of the election for members of Congress.

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| 1st Dist. | Jas H. Langdon, Whig. |
| 2d " | Geo. C. Dring, Whig, Deca. |
| 3d " | W. L. Guggen, Whig. |
| 4th " | Henry A. West, Whig. |
| 5th " | Newton, Whig, probably elected over R. M. T. Hunter. |
| 6th " | Clifton, Whig. |
| 7th " | Lucas, Democrat. |
| 8th " | Lucas, Democrat. |
| 9th " | Lucas, Democrat. |

The result not heard in the other Districts. It is said that the Whigs will have but five out of the fifteen Representatives. In the last Congress they had eight. It is supposed that the great Lapeater, Bates, is defeated.

The returns for members of the House of Delegates is but small. Sufficient, however, has come in to show that the Democrats are in the majority. "Truth has not been crushed to earth" in Virginia.

MURDER OF ELISHA WILSON.

The trial of Thomas Thorne for the alleged murder of Elisha Wilson is now going on in Portland. This murder was committed about the first of Feb. last. Mrs. Wilson, wife of the deceased, and Thomas Thorne was accused of the murder at the time, and have been confined in jail at Portland since the 5th or 6th of Feb. Dr. McKean's testimony goes to show pretty conclusively that Wilson must have received at least two or three severe blows on the skull, one of which produced a fracture just in front of the left ear. Mrs. Wilson and Mr. Thorne said immediately after the news of Wilson's death that he came to his end by falling out of bed, in consequence of which he hit his head against a chair post by which his skull was fractured and death was the result. The trial has not progressed far and whether Thorne will be convicted or not is doubtful.

Highly Delighted.—The Kennebec Journal has been taking a little ebullient comar at the idea that Mr. Van Buren would not answer the circular of the Indiana State Convention. But its delight is all over. Hurray! has been received; and it is a direct hit low at Whiggery, because it says he shall abide the decision of a National Convention. The letter is very lengthy and does not admit of insertion. It affords no prospect of division in the ranks of the Democracy.

John M. Hays.—Mr. Sweeney, of the Kennebec Journal, says that "Bates is a bold fellow" and he "likes him for his sterling integrity." In saying this we cannot think the editor exercises his usual good sense. We have never witnessed any thing in him that shows integrity of purpose, or well established moral or political principles. He possesses more of the characteristics of the ferocious Tiger than of the bold and generous Lion.

DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION.

Where shall it be held? We don't care where, so it is at some point of easy access, and giving general satisfaction.

When shall it be held? Don't care when, so it is a day upon which the party will unite.

How shall the Delegates be chosen? By Districts.

Who shall be the nominee? The man who by the Convention is decided most popular and most worthy. These are our opinions, brief, as true, but they contain the full meaning of our contemporaries who talk by the column.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

These are precisely our sentiments.—Pittsburg Sentinel.

And ours. Pray, who has any objection?

Siamese Twins.—It will be recollected that nearly all the citizens of this country have paid nine pence a piece for a sight at these twins. They have finally settled down on the means thus amassed, and what is very strange under the circumstances, have got each of them a wife.

Embassy to China.—Mr. Everett received information of his appointment as Minister to China just before the departure of the last steamer from England. Before he accepts he will wait some little time to revolve the subject. The recent mobs at Canton and great loss of property occasioned by them will cause him to hesitate.

NORTHEASTERN BOUNDARY—ANOTHER MAP.

We were shown yesterday, says the Rochester Democrat, by Mr. Donald McLeod, of this city, a common sized map published in London, in December, 1783, entitled a "Map of the United States of America as settled by the treaty of peace." This map is taken from the "European Magazine," a well known periodical of the times, and from the date, must have been published a few days after the treaty was made public. The North Eastern Boundary of the State of Maine is set down precisely as in the maps of the last ten years. This shows that the people of those days interpreted the treaty precisely as we do, and goes far towards establishing the validity of the American claim.

The map with the treaty of peace was found some 30 years ago by Mr. McLeod, among some old papers in a library in the city of Glasgow, Scotland, and was brought with him when he emigrated to the United States.

ANOTHER VICTIM.

"We learn from the Augusta Banner that a gentleman from Buckfield was carried to the Insane Hospital at that place last week, having been made crazy by a Millerite revival. He is a husband and a father, greatly respected and needed by his amiable and afflicted family.

We understand that Millerism has broken out at Farmington Falls, and is doing a desolating work.—Serious fears are entertained lest several persons will become permanently crazy.

Now the 23d of April has passed, we had hoped that revivalists would allow this delusion to die quietly a natural death. But they seem willing to let the capital of any thing. Their morning, noon and evening meals are made up of whole dishes of newly cooked humbugs."—Bath Enquirer.

Since the 23d of April Epidemic Millerism has wonderfully abated in this quarter. We should judge from all appearances that its subjects had settled down in the opinion that the Father of us all and the Great Dispenser of Events, would carry things along about as usual, and not vary much from his original intentions. The Gospel has not yet been preached to every creature. When it is, we may with some plausibility look for the final consummation of all things, and not before. We would say to all Millerites—"Work while the day lasts." Earn your own living. "Live within your means,"—be industrious, frugal, temperate in speech, and in all things; and finally leave prophesying to those who are above fallacy. Do this with a religious sense of duty, and the wish that the world will suddenly come to an end will no longer be father to the thought.

The CILLEY DEED.—By the following extract from a speech recently delivered by Mr. Wise before his constituents, it will be seen that he reiterates the statement made by him in Congress, as to the manner in which the lamented Cilley was sacrificed to appease the Mobster of Mr. Clay's animosity.

"He said it was a fair deal; but if censure and odium attached to any one, it should be to Henry Clay; for he was the counsellor and adviser, and dictated the terms of the deed; that he (Mr. W.) protested against the title and language of the challenge, but was overruled by Mr. Clay; that he expressed an unwillingness to be the bearer of a challenge so unbecoming in its character, but at length yielded to an appeal from Mr. Graves, who reminded him that he had been his friend on a similar occasion."

The Bowdoin Estate.—Some difficulty has arisen recently between the Trustees of Bowdoin College and the Agents of Mr. Temple Bowdoin, son of the late proprietor, in regard to the ownership of a certain piece of real estate. The Boston Advertiser has the following:

"Some excitement was caused Tuesday morning in the vicinity of the Bowdoin Estate at the corner of Bowdoin and Bacon streets, by the destruction of the wooden buildings recently erected there, and the removal of their materials and contents. These buildings have been erected by authority of the trustees of Bowdoin College, who claim the right in this property, of which they thus take possession. They were removed by the agents of Mr. Temple Bowdoin, the son of the late proprietor, who claims the property. We understand that measures have been taken by the eminent counsel retained, which will result in a decision by the courts on the rights of the parties."

Letimer, the runaway Slave.—The Governor of Virginia has recently demanded of Governor Morton the delivery of the slave Letimer. Gov. M. directly replies that he has no authority to reverse or alter the decision of his predecessor in this case; for it has already been adjudicated. And furthermore, he replies that such a person as the Gov. of Virginia requires to be given up has not been in the State to his knowledge since the receipt of the demand.

Steam Boat Explosion.—The Steamboat Mohogan on her passage from N. York to Stonington lost one of her boilers, carrying away the wood-work abreast of it. One hundred and fifty passengers were aboard—and all were very much alarmed. Only three persons were injured. She was towed to a place of safety by the assistance of another Boat.

Temperance Papers.—The Maine Washingtonian Journal and Temperance Herald, which is a union of several papers, has been published some time, has been and is now in favor of forcing certain temperance principles. A new paper called the "Washingtonian Journal" is to be started in Portland, on the moral session plan. We like the latter method of dealing with men much better, and hope its sentiments will prevail.

Porto Rico—Insurrection of the Negroes.—The Negroes have revolted in some of the plantations and several of the inhabitants have been killed. The Governor of the Island was sent for, who ordered out a body of special police Officers to suppress it. Serious consequences were apprehended, owing to the excitement and alarm.

The Editor of the Maine Enquirer doubts the fairness of the experiments performed by Rice and Beck with in Animal Magnetism. We guess the editor is not so easily humbugged as some men.

Mr. Clay has taken the stump in opposition to F. P. Marshall.

DEPUTY SHERIFF,
FOR THE COUNTIES OF
CUMBERLAND & OXFORD,
POLAND, Me.